

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic mail receiving method for use in a communications terminal having an electronic mail reception function, comprising

5 making to a user a notification that protection must be released if a state where a new electronic mail cannot be captured unless the protection of an existing electronic mail is released is determined, when the new 10 electronic mail is received, or an inquiry is made to a mail server.

2. The electronic mail receiving method according to claim 1, further comprising

15 obtaining a minimum number of existing electronic mails for which protection is to be released so as to capture a new electronic mail and notifying the user of the obtained number, and making the user release the protection together for a plurality of existing 20 electronic mails if the protection of the plurality of electronic mails is released, when the determination is made.

25 3. The electronic mail receiving method according to claim 1, further comprising

making the user release the protection by transferring display contents to a protection release operation screen after making the notification to the user.

5

4. The electronic mail receiving method according to claim 2, further comprising

capturing a new electronic mail by making a deletion sequentially from an existing electronic mail 10 having an older date among the existing electronic mails for which the protection has been released.

5. The electronic mail receiving method according to claim 1, wherein

15 the state where a new electronic mail cannot be captured unless the protection of an existing electronic mail is released is a state where a received electronic mail box is full and all of existing electronic mails are set to be protected.

20

6. A communications terminal, comprising:

a determining unit determining a state where a new electronic mail cannot be captured unless protection of an existing electronic mail is released, when the 25 new electronic mail is received, or an inquiry is made

to a mail server; and

5 a guidance unit making to a user a notification that the protection must be released, if said determining unit determines the state where the new electronic mail cannot be captured unless the protection of an existing electronic mail is released.

7. The communications terminal according to claim 6, wherein

10 said guidance unit obtains a minimum number of existing electronic mails for which protection is to be released so as to capture a new electronic mail and notifies the user of the obtained number, and makes the user release the protection together for a plurality 15 of existing electronic mails if the protection of the plurality of electronic mails is released.

8. A computer-readable storage medium on which is recorded a program for causing a computer to execute 20 a process, the process comprising

making to a user a notification that protection must be released if a state where a new electronic mail cannot be captured unless the protection of an existing electronic mail is released is determined, when the new 25 electronic mail is received, or an inquiry is made to

a mail server.

9. The storage medium according to claim 8, the process further comprising

5 making the user release the protection by transferring display contents to a protection release operation screen after making the notification to the user.

10 10. The storage medium according to claim 8, the process further comprising

obtaining a minimum number of existing electronic mails for which protection is to be released so as to capture a new electronic mail and notifying the user 15 of the obtained number, and making the user release the protection together for a plurality of existing electronic mails if the protection of the plurality of electronic mails is released, when the determination is made.

20

11. A propagation signal for propagating a program to a computer, the program causing the computer to execute

making to a user a notification that protection 25 must be released if a state where a new electronic mail

cannot be captured unless the protection of an existing electronic mail is released is determined, when the new electronic mail is received, or an inquiry is made to a mail server.

5

12. The propagation signal according to claim 11, the program causing the computer to further execute making the user release the protection by transferring display contents to a protection release 10 operation screen after making the notification to the user.

13. The propagation signal according to claim 11, the program causing the computer to further execute 15 obtaining a minimum number of existing electronic mails for which protection is to be released so as to capture a new electronic mail and notifying the user of the obtained number, and making the user release the protection together for a plurality of existing 20 electronic mails if the protection of the plurality of electronic mails is released, when the determination is made.